

A SKETCH
OF THE
SYSTEM OF EDUCATION
AND
COURSE OF STUDY
PURSUED IN THE
Montreal Academical Institution.

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PURSUED IN THE

Montreal Academical Institution,

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF

THE REV. H. ESSON.

MONTREAL:
PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE MONTREAL GAZETTE,
PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY.

1827.

A SKETCH, &c.

THE design of the following Sketch is to give, to Parents and Guardians, a clear and comprehensive view of the System of Education, pursued in the Institution, with an explanation of the principles on which it is formed and conducted.

In order to estimate correctly the merits of any particular system, we must keep in view the general purpose of Education, and consider it, not merely in detached parts, but as a connected whole.

The two great ends of Education, unquestionably, are, first, to train the young to those habits—and, secondly, to impart to them that instruction, in the several branches of knowledge, which may be necessary to fit them for the general duties and business of life—and to qualify them for their destined situations and professions.

Of these ends, the first, viz. the formation of habits, is by far the most important. To form the minds of the young to habits of attention, order, activity and perseverance—to train them to habits of just thinking, of patient reflection, of clear, close and accurate reasoning—is the general and grand object of Education, and far more important than the mere communication of knowledge, or the acquisition of new ideas.—The degree, therefore, in which any plan of Education is fitted to accomplish *this end*, in particular, will form the best criterion of its merits.

In pursuing the second object we have mentioned, viz. the instruction of youth in the different branches of knowledge, it is important to observe, that the aim is not so much to accomplish the mind, by putting it in full possession of the treasures of knowledge,—which is the work of a much longer period of time than the few years of youth devoted to Education,—as to prepare it for future acquisitions, by developing its powers, awakening its curiosity, and furnishing it with those elements and principles, which may enable it, to prosecute its enquiries, and to perfect its attainments.

To make a proper distribution of time and studies,—to form a judicious and well connected arrangement of the several branches of Edu-

education,—to conduct the Pupil through such a course of instruction and discipline, as may be best adapted to develope, to exercise and to invigorate the various powers and faculties of the mind,—to lay a broad and solid foundation of general knowledge and improvement, by impressing on his mind those elements and principles, which are of the most extensive use and application, in every department of human knowledge,—and to enforce regularity, attention and application, by a moderate and steady discipline,—is a general view of the means, by which the ends of Education may be attained. And to illustrate more fully their application, will be our object, in the sequel of this sketch.

A proper distribution of time and studies is a point of primary importance. In this respect, it will be the object of an enlightened teacher to give full employment to the Pupil, without fatiguing or overstraining his mind—or subjecting him to a rigorous confinement, which, by depressing his spirit, and ultimately injuring his health and impairing his constitution, would have the effect of retarding, instead of advancing his progress. Proper alternations of study and relaxation will prevent weariness and disgust, on the one hand, and preserve the mind from indolence and remission, on the other.

On this principle have the hours of study been arranged in the Academy. During the Summer half year, two hours are devoted to study, in the morning, from six to eight o'clock ; then an interval of two hours ensues. Studies are resumed after breakfast, and continued from ten to twelve. Another interval of two hours succeeds. And in the afternoon, studies are renewed at two o'clock and close at four (with the exception of half-holidays—Wednesdays and Saturdays.)

In winter, it is impossible to follow out this arrangement, from the shortness of the day. During the winter half-year, therefore, the hours of study are, from nine to twelve, A. M. and from two to four, P. M.

When you add, to these hours of attendance in School, the time, necessarily employed, during the intervals, in preparing the lessons, prescribed in the respective classes, and in attending to the subordinate branches of Education—French, Drawing, Dancing, &c. it will be acknowledged, by every competent judge, that as much employment is given to the Pupil, as can be continued, for any length of time, without impairing health of body or energy of mind, or, at least, without rendering the labour of study, irksome and grievous to him.

The next point to the distribution of time—is the *selection* and *arrangement* of studies.

In order fully to comprehend the principle of this selection and arrangement, it is necessary to observe, that the branches of a liberal education may be comprehended, under three capital divisions, viz. Mathematics, Classical Learning and General Knowledge.

The Mathematics—while they are of extensive use and application in the Arts, Sciences and Philosophy, and afford a key to a wide and various department of human knowledge,—furnish, in the judgment of the most enlightened writers on Education, the best discipline for the developement of the powers of judgment and reasoning.

Classical Studies, on the other hand, by bringing us acquainted with ancient languages, literature and philosophy, shed a universal light over the field of human knowledge ; and neither modern languages or modern literature can be acquired to *perfection*, by one destitute of the advantage of classical instruction.

As to the third of these divisions, which we have denominated *General Knowledge*,—the *ground work* of it is laid, in an acquaintance with the elements of Chronology, Geography, History (Civil and Natural), Antiquities and a general view or *outline* of Science and Philosophy.

These three grand divisions seem to embrace all the objects of a liberal education.

In the plan of study, therefore, followed in the Academy, the attention of the pupil, instead of being devoted *exclusively* to any one of these branches, is *fairly divided* among them. Morning hours are devoted to Grammatical and Classical Studies—the afternoon to Arithmetic and Mathematics—and the various elements of General Knowledge are interwoven with these *main* studies.

By this arrangement, the great departments of human knowledge are closely combined, and go hand in hand,—each has its *proper place*, and a share of attention bestowed upon it, *proportioned* to its importance; and hence it is presumed, that every purpose of a liberal Education, whether in regard to the *improvement of the mind* and its *faculties*, or the *acquisition* of the elements of *science, literature* and *general knowledge*, is effectually secured.

Having thus determined the grand divisions, which may be considered, as constituting the system of a liberal education, the *general principle* of the *order* and *succession* of the several parts of the system, will be sufficiently simple and obvious, viz. to dispose the different branches, and the several parts of the same branch, in such an order, that the previous parts may form an in-

roduction to the subsequent—that each may follow each, in its natural and proper order—and that the Pupil, by learning one thing thoroughly, before another is undertaken, may advance, without embarrassment, by gradual and easy steps.

And here, let it be particularly observed, that it is a principle, of the first importance in Education, to direct the attention of the Pupil, to what is *most essential*, in *every department*,—to make him *dwell on first principles*—the *Elements of Grammar, Science and General Knowledge*—and, by *reiterated inculcation*, to *imprint these indelibly* on his mind.

With this view, it ought to be a primary object, to subject the Pupil to *strict and frequent examination*, on *these essential elements*,—never to admit a *loose, superficial and inaccurate habit of thinking or reasoning*,—to oblige him, in *every instance*, to give a *clear and full statement of his ideas*, and a *distinct account of the grounds or principles*, on which *he has formed his judgment*.

Accordingly, the mode of instruction, pursued in the Academy, is, to *converse easily and familiarly* with the Pupil,—to encourage him *freely to state doubts and difficulties*, when they occur to him,—frequently to *interrogate and call him to account*, with regard to the subjects of

his studies, so as to keep his understanding and memory constantly active,—and, by habitual exercise, to stimulate, quicken and invigorate his intellectual powers.

And here it may not be improper to remark, how much *a solid and truly useful* education differs from that *ostentation and parade*, by which parents are so apt to be beguiled. To teach a universal course of Science, in the space of a few years, and to inspire the vain hope, that the Pupil shall be returned to his friends *all accomplished*, is a profession, which, however common, every competent judge of Education will reject with contempt.

It does not consist with the nature of a solid Education, to embrace a wide field, or to take in a great variety of dissimilar studies. To dwell on first principles, and to confine the attention of youth, more particularly, to what is elementary and essential, will be the object of every enlightened teacher. And if the progress of the Pupil, under such a system of instruction, shall not, in appearance, be so rapid and imposing, let it be remembered, that the *importance and accuracy* of the knowledge acquired, are much more to be regarded, than its *extent or variety*,—and that the Pupil, *well grounded in elements and first principles*, will have no great difficulty, in the course of his future life, to extend his acquire-

ments,—and on such a foundation, to raise to any height the superstructure.

In conformity with the general views here attempted to be explained—when the pupil has acquired the first elements of an English Education, viz. Reading and Spelling, he commences the study of English Grammar, and the first Book, put into his hand, is Lindley Murray's Abridgement.

As it is of peculiar importance, at this age, to exercise and cultivate the faculty of memory, preparatory to the harder exercises of Classical Study, it is the practice, daily, to prescribe a certain number of lines or verses of poetry, to the Tyros in these English classes.

After the pupil has acquired some knowledge of his vernacular Grammar, he commences the study of Latin, but that he may not forget his previous acquirements, a daily lesson is given in English Reading, Spelling and Grammar,—and, in the higher classes, he is made to go over Murray's Larger Grammar, and the exercises connected with it. The Appendix to this Grammar, with the appropriate exercises, is reserved for the highest class, and may be regarded, as giving a finish to the English education, and as the most proper method of initiating the Pupil in the art of Composition, as well as a prepara-

tion for the higher studies of Rhetoric and Criticism. In order that the Pupil may become perfectly acquainted with the *Orthography*, *Orthophy*, and *meaning* of words, in his own language, he is made to spell, pronounce, trace the Etymology, and define the meaning of every word, in the Abridgement of Walker's Dictionary.

With a view to facilitate the acquisition of General Knowledge, a *brief outline* of Geography, Chronology and History is taught the Pupil, in the Junior Classes,—a *more detailed view*, being reserved for the time, when he enters the higher classes.

When the Pupil has made some progress in Grammatical Study, and has advanced to the perusal of the higher Classics, Greek and Latin, his attention is *particularly* directed to the *sense* and *spirit* of the writer, and, without neglecting Prosody, or Philology, it is deemed an object, of at least equal importance, to make him acquainted with Geography, Chronology and Antiquities, and to illustrate from these sources, whatever, in the course of Reading, may require such illustration.—For this purpose, the elementary instruction, given in the junior classes, is followed up by a more ample and detailed view of these subjects. And the Pupil, being habitually exercised, in applying this knowledge to the il-

illustration of the Classics, thereby acquires an interest in these studies, while, at the same time, he is taught to appreciate their value and use.

At a proper age, the pupil commences the study of Arithmetic, and, when this is accurately acquired, he proceeds to Algebra and Geometry.—In Mathematics, as in other branches of Education, the great object being, to impress, on the mind of the learner, *elements* and *first principles*, and to lay a deep and solid foundation, rather than to hurry on the pupil, through an extended course, in which his attainments, however *specious* must be *superficial*, a paramount attention is paid to Euclid's Elements, as the foundation of Geometrical Science,—and these, with Algebra and plain and spherical Trigonometry, are sufficient to occupy all the time, that the generality of pupils can spare, without prejudice to their other studies. And if these elements be accurately acquired, they open to the scholar an access to every department of Mathematical knowledge, and qualify him, in future years, if inclination or necessity prompt, to pursue these studies by himself, and to complete his Mathematical Education.

The last object, in the course of Instruction, is, to unfold, to the more advanced pupils, a general view of human knowledge, in its various departments; beginning with the elements of Natural History—proceeding from thence to Che-

mistry and Natural Philosophy,—and closing the whole with a short sketch of *Logic*, *Moral* and *Political* science, accommodated, as much as possible, to the capacity of the youthful mind, and conveyed, through the medium of familiar conversation, to which the attention of the pupils is kept alive, by frequent interrogation, and by calling upon them to *re-state* or *explain* what has been thus delivered. The great object of this is—to unfold to their minds a general prospect of the *wide* and *diversified* field of human knowledge,—to give them an idea of the *nature* and *objects*, of the *order* and *connection* of the different sciences,—to state the *principal facts* and *discoveries*,—to inculcate the *general principles* and the most *important doctrines* of each of them, —and to *awaken* the *curiosity*, *interest* and *ambition* of the youthful mind, so as to *dispose* it, for the *prosecution* of studies, in which, the utmost that can be accomplished at *this age* is simply *an initiation*, *proficiency* in them being only to be attained, by close and continued application, in *riper years*. Such an outline, in which, a compendious view of human knowledge is exhibited, in an easy and familiar style, and in which, the leading facts, principles and doctrines are impressed upon the mind of the pupil, by frequent recapitulation and examination, is conceived to be better adapted to youth, than a

complete course of Lectures, in which, the attention is apt to be distracted, and the mind bewildered, amidst a multiplicity of details.

By this course of instruction, every purpose, which is proposed, in a liberal Education, seems likely to be accomplished, and certainly, as much as it is possible to accomplish, in the period of time, that is usually allotted for the Education of youth in this Country.

Those, who are intended for a mercantile life, will have their attention directed, *particularly*, to the studies, which form the best preparation for their future destination, viz. English Reading and Grammar,—Arithmetic and Book-keeping,—Geography with the Doctrine of the Globes,—the Elements of Mathematics and History. Particular attention is paid to the important Art of Writing.

The principle of the Division of labour, is not of less importance and efficacy, in Education, than in the mechanical arts. With a view fully to secure the advantage of this division of labour, there are five masters in the Academy; each of whom, being charged with the superintendence and instruction of a limited number of pupils, and having his undivided attention, directed to a particular department of study, the Seminary may be regarded, as possessing the chief advantage, attending the Lancasterian system of Education; each master, acting as a monitor, and having, un-

der his eye, a limited number of pupils, who enjoy the benefit of his constant superintendence and tuition.

It will be observed, from the above sketch, that the whole course of Education, in the Institution, is a system of which all the parts, successively, are *mutually dependant, and closely connected*, and hence the propriety, of sending pupils to the Seminary, at an early age, will be obvious. Besides the inconvenience to the Teacher,—great disadvantage arises to the pupil, when, entering the Seminary at an advanced age, he becomes associated with class-mates, who have enjoyed the advantage of the preparatory instruction, in the previous classes, and consequently have a superiority, in the competition with him, which is apt to discourage his mind, and to damp his emulation.

The much agitated question, of the comparative merits of a Public and Private education, may be discussed in few words. If the object of Education were, to fit men, merely, for a life of contemplation and seclusion, a private education might have some claim to a preference. But, since it is the end of Education, to fit youth for business and action, to prepare them for the warfare of life, the competitions and collisions of the world—it is obvious, that a public school, exhibiting, as it does, in miniature, an image of the world, furnishes, precisely, that kind of disci-

pline, which is the best preparation, for the duties and exigencies of life. As to the dangers to which a boy is exposed, in a public school, whether they be alleged to affect his person or his morals, it is conceived, that they have been greatly exaggerated, and admitting, that they are as great, as they have been represented, the sooner a young person is accustomed to meet the trials and hazards, which he must encounter in life, the sooner will he acquire that intrepidity and fortitude, which form his best security, personal and moral, in future years. In a public school, the character of a boy acquires, a *firmness*, a *manliness*, a *hardihood*—by *competition* and *collision* with his fellow-pupils, and by having his *self-will* checked and opposed by that of others. Thus he grows up, like a hardy plant exposed to the external air, and to all the varieties of the weather—whereas, the pupil of private education, like a hot-bed plant, neither in the constitution of his mind or body, is fitted to bear the asperities and adversities of life. Indeed, if a just view be taken of the circumstances of the case, it will appear, that the objections, urged against a public school, are without any substantial foundation—or, if they have any application, it is, only to the case of a youth, who, in attending a public Seminary, is left, without any private or domestic superintendence. When the pu-

pils, as in the present instance, are, almost without exception, placed either under the protection and guardianship of parents and friends, or, as in the case of the boarders, under the immediate eye of the masters it is evident, that all the advantages of a private Education, are combined with those of a public.—And when those, who preside over the domestic education, *enter heartily* into the *views*, and *co-operate steadily* with the *endeavours* of the public teachers, the utmost that the power of Education can effect, on the minds and morals of youth, may be reasonably expected from their united exertions.

As connected with this subject, it may be proper to mention, that, in the government of this Seminary, measures of coercion and severity are employed, only, when the influence of milder methods is found ineffective. The principle of fear and terror, in its operation on the mind of youth, is, if not less powerful, at least far less salutary and generous, in its influence, than emulation, and motives of honour and shame. For this reason, it is the object, in the discipline of the Seminary, as much as possible, to treat the pupil, as a rational and moral being—to work upon his mind, by the influence of honour and shame,—of hope and generous ambition, and to govern him by the power of reason,—by conviction and persuasion. And with a view further

to awaken and to strengthen moral feeling in the youthful mind it is the object, to encourage these to exercise a kind of moral censorship over one another, to cherish and cultivate a spirit of honour and generous pride, and hence, when any offence is committed, against good feeling, or good morals, an appeal is directly made, to their own sense and judgment—and a sort of public opinion is thus established and made to operate, in school, as in the world; a much more effectual means, of checking every thing, that is unworthy or immoral, than the utmost rigour of discipline, or the most unremitting vigilance and circumspection, on the part of the masters.

With a view to excite and keep alive, a spirit of generous emulation—a medal is assigned to every class, which is worn by the Dux. A register of the standing of the pupils in each class, is kept by putting, after their names, the numbers, denoting their places in the class—At the end of each month, when there is a general recapitulation of studies, to which parents and friends, have admission, the average monthly standing of every boy, is determined, by the sum of the numbers, affixed to his name, in the Register, and denoting his place, for every day of the month. He, whose numbers, when thus added, give the smallest sum, is dux—and the others follow him in a succession regulated by the same principle.

At the half-yearly examination, every boy has his place according to his relative standing, for the six months preceding—and on this principle, the annual prizes are awarded. This gives full scope to the spirit of emulation, and keeps it constantly alive and active.

With a view to remedy the great inconvenience, under which, we labour, in this country, from the deficiency of school books, it is intended to import, next spring, a complete set of the most approved elementary works, in every branch of Education, now adopted in the Seminaries of the parent country.

Montreal presents many advantages to the Student. Among these may be mentioned, Lectures on Chemistry, Botany and Natural Philosophy—advantages, which will, unquestionably, be multiplied and extended with the progress of the City.—A Museum of Natural History has lately been formed, and a society established, to promote this study, for which Montreal, from its central situation, in the Canadas, and its facility of communication with every part of America, possesses such eminent advantages.

Young Gentlemen, intended for the study of Law and Medicine, will, it is presumed, find advantages *here* superior to any other place in the Province. A complete course of Lectures, in Medicine and Surgery, in all their various branches,

with a Medical Hospital and Library, afford the Student of Medicine every facility, for the attainment of professional knowledge, and a certificate of his attendance on the Hospital and Lectures in Montreal, will, it has been ascertained, abridge the period of study otherwise required, for taking a degree in Edinburgh or Dublin.

The pupils boarded in the Establishment enjoy the advantage of private tuition and assistance, in their studies.—They are under the strict and constant superintendence of the masters (who live in the house), and have every attention paid to their health, comfort and morals.

TERMS.

Board and Lodging per Annum, . . .	£ 30-0-0.
Washing and Mending,	4-0-0.
Education per Annum, viz:	6-0-0.
English Reading, Spelling,	6-0-0.
Grammar and Writing,	8-0-0.
Arithmetic and Book-keeping,	10.
Greek, Latin and Mathematics,	
Geography Chronology and	
History,	
French,	3-0-0.
Drawing,	3-0-0.
Dancing,	5-0-0.
Music,	3-0-0.
Fuel during winter months.	0-7-6.

Boarders are required to furnish their own beds, bedding and towels. School fees and Board wages, are paid at the end of each quarters.—
The quarter days are

and the day scholars are
required to bring their fees to school on these
days.

